



Office of River Protection

PRESS RELEASE

**Office of River Protection
Richland, Washington**

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STATEMENT BY OFFICE OF RIVER PROTECTION MANAGER HARRY BOSTON

I believe the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) share a sense of urgency to clean up Hanford's tank waste - and protect the Columbia River and the people of the Pacific Northwest. Simply put, our agencies agree that we must complete this important project without further delay.

And that is what DOE's Office of River Protection is doing. Our plan keeps the project on schedule to meet the Tri Party Agreement (TPA) milestone dates to begin waste treatment plant operations in 2007. Our scheduled start of construction in 2002 allows us to preserve this key date and keeps the project on track to continue making safe, technically sound progress. We fully expect our regulators to hold DOE accountable for continued progress and for meeting the 2007 date and other commitments for Hanford tank waste clean up.

Unfortunately, cancellation of the privatization approach, despite the subsequent expedited award of a traditional contract, makes it impossible for DOE to meet the milestone date of July 31 to begin construction. Over the past year, DOE and Ecology have made much progress on regulatory issues, but in the end our agencies could not agree on modifying the TPA to extend the date for the start of construction.

Regardless of this dispute, we hope to continue a constructive working relationship with Ecology and to clean up Hanford's tank waste under the framework of the TPA. The tank waste project is a large, complex, and difficult job, and we expect to encounter and overcome challenges at each phase of this project. But we remain firmly committed to completing this critical project and keeping our promise to the citizens of the Pacific Northwest.

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Note: Congress created The Office of River Protection in 1998 to manage the nation's largest and most complex environmental cleanup project - retrieval and treatment of tank waste at the Hanford Site. More background information on the Office of River Protection can be found on the office's Web site at: <http://www.hanford.gov/orp>.